

Toy Safety



consumer**brief**

At each stage of development, children face new challenges and potential risks. Being aware of the dangers associated with toys at different stages of development can help you protect your child from injury.

According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission, choking is the most common cause of toy-related deaths. That soft, cuddly stuffed bear could present a choking hazard to your child if the eyes or nose come loose. Balloons, standard fare for any birthday party, can pop and become lodged in your child's throat.

- Never give latex balloons to children younger than 8 years of age.
- Balls and blocks should not be smaller than 1 3/4" in diameter.
- Make sure small parts of larger toys, such as wheels on toy cars, are secure and cannot break off.

Remember that age labels on toys do not refer to your child's cognitive abilities. They are a warning that the toy may present a choking threat or some other danger to your child.

BEFORE BUYING:

- Avoid toys that have objects that can be shot or propelled.
- Avoid toys that make loud noises, like cap guns, because they can damage a child's hearing.
- Make sure strings and ribbons are no longer than 6 inches to prevent strangulation; and
- Avoid toys with sharp points or edges.

AFTER BUYING:

- Spot check toys regularly for minor damage and urge your children to let you know when the toys need repair.
- Throw away all toy packaging, such as plastic, cellophane and styrofoam.
- Make sure batteries in toys are properly installed and never allow your child to sleep with a battery-operated toy.
- Encourage your children to put all of their toys away so that the toys do not become tripping hazards; and
- Teach your child to use every toy properly.

Toys such as bicycles, scooters, skateboards and in-line skates are safer when children wear protective gear. If you plan to give any of these toys as gifts, make them safer by also giving a helmet, knee pads, elbow pads or wrist guards.



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